

Governor Hodges delivers the following address to the Joint Assembly.

Mr. President Barnhardt, Mr. Speaker Doughton, and Members of the General Assembly:

I have asked to address you on the subject of salary raises for teachers and other state employees. In the weeks since our Biennial Message was given you we have seen a great and growing interest in our schools and more particularly in the salaries of school teachers. Some of the interest you have seen and felt is highly organized, but I believe there is more sincere and real, widespread interest than we have had in many years.

There has not been a clear understanding as to how I feel and many of you feel about schools and teachers' salaries. Some people have indicated that we wanted to unload the state's present burden on to the local school units. That is not true! Let me quote a statement of policy I made at Wilmington, North Carolina, on January 26, 1957:

"May I explain briefly our point of view on public schools because there has been some misunderstanding as to my attitude and program. I am for public schools and always have been. I have supported every bond issue and tax supplement, state and local (my community), for 35 years. I have taught; my sister has taught for 25 years; my wife was a teacher. I do not think our good teachers are paid enough or that we take care of our best students. I want the state to continue to support at a state level nine months, twelve grades (which costs the state over \$100 million a year). I want the state to take care of increased school population and also to raise salaries at a state level. I do not think the state can ever pay more than a good minimum, and if we are to enrich our curriculum and get the best teachers, we should, if we can do it, pay something at the local level."

Let me briefly give you a further explanation. In March 1956, when I made a talk to the Teachers State Convention in Asheville, I raised the question of local participation in teachers' salaries, as I was sincerely interested at that time, over a year ago, in their getting raises. I indicated as an example that the legislature might be asked to grant a ten per cent salary raise and offer another five per cent to match still another five per cent from local units. I saw North Carolina losing ground in teachers' salaries and wanted to see us do something. We had slipped in five years from 29th to 38th place. There was no particular interest shown by teachers or school leaders in my Asheville statement, so in a talk to the 176 county and city superintendents at Durham in December 1956, I said:

"I realize that I do not have your support entirely in this idea of local support and I think it is probably expecting too much to have the support of the General Assembly for the so-called matching formula which I proposed for teachers' salaries.

"What I propose to you tonight and for the first time, is that we have a State Citizens Committee for Better Schools to make a study of our school needs with particular reference to the financing and the responsi-